

WOMEN! THIS IS YOUR NEWSPAPER

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WOMEN'S VIDEO - ROOMS WITH MANY VIEWS

By Lyle Ruppenthal

About one hundred people showed up at the Women's Interart Center, 549 W. 53 St., on April 10 to participate in opening night of the third Women's Video Festival. In at least two ways this event differed from previous video festivals.

Each viewing room reflected a certain mood. For example, the "glitter room" sported fashion fads of the Fifties such as leopard upholstery and spiked-heel wall art. Prior to the sample screening, the TV sets (two or three to a room) monitored their own audiences or those in the other viewing rooms.

Also, the audience could play with video games between showings. While riding Susan Milano's "Video Swing," for example, viewers saw their own continuous motion displayed on three monitors. "The Shower," by Daile Kaplan, in which the spectator emerged as a participant, quite unexpectedly made the

viewer a voyeur. One of the most popular toys, Wendy Clarke's "The Elephant," required the participant to draw her own profile by looking into two mirrors, one showing her profile, the other monitoring her efforts at profile drawing.

Like all good video festivals, this one represented the best of what is being done. Women video makers from throughout the U.S. sent in documentaries, video art, erotic material, and multi-channel presentations. The festival offered four entirely different showings Thursdays through Sundays through April 26. The opening-night selection ranged from Pat Lehman's computer-generated tape "Video Vitae," an impressionistic view of a woman in conflict, to "Keeping the Door Open—Ann Shafer" by Kim Beaman and Lydia Kleiner, a documentary on a feminist labor negotiator, who helped found the Coalition of

Labor Union Women as a thirty-year employee of the Kellogg cereal plant in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Although I did not see Friday's and Saturday's programs, I doubt that the tapes could have surpassed Sunday's in capturing the quality of women's activities. "Older Women's Consciousness Raising—Why I Joined," by Tracy Fitz, Ileana Rudolph, Barbara Slemmer, and Eugenia Volkes; "Women in the Martial Arts," by Jean Mundy and Harmony Hammond, "Songs, Skits, Poetry and Prison Life," by Ariel Dougherty and the Women of Bedford Hills Correctional Facility; and Joan Guimmo's "Interview with Lolly and Jean Hirsch" (two women working for a gynecological self-help movement) gave breadth to the program. Two more personal tapes, "Massage I: Variations," by Janice Cohen, an exchange between two masseuses which becomes a com-

position of abstract form and sound, and "Lesbianism/Feminism," Norma Pontes and Rita Moreira's political synthesis of the women's movement in New York, provided the depth needed to round out the program.

Although the festival is now over, the Women's Interart Center holds monthly showings of *Video Letters*, which are half-hour tapes made by women video makers from New York, Washington, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The purpose of *Video Letters*, the originators say, is to provide a way to see what women are doing in other cities.

For information about show times of the *Video Letters*, contact Ann Eugenia Volkes or Susan Milano at the Women's Interart Center: (212) 246-6570. Questions concerning the New York *Video Letter* should be addressed to its coordinator, Women Make Movies, at: (212) 929-6477.